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ing, after the fashion of the Chinese. Below this, the stick is plain. I tried every means in my power to obtain this, but could not buy it." 293

The stick, which was seen by the writer, is still unobtainable.

Gold Ornaments.—Pendants of gold were formerly worn as chiefs' insignia, and, it is said, were also given to successful partisans in the Tiribi war. They are now nearly a thing of the past, as the whites have long eagerly sought and purchased them. These ornaments were made in the form of eagles (sometimes double-headed), alligators, and frogs, and were worn as breast-plates or gorgets. They no doubt were entirely similar to the antique forms from the graves at Las Mercedes. Señor Ricardo Fernandez Guardia[17] reproduces a photograph of Antonio Saldaña, father of Ramón and last "king" of the Bribri, with several large gold eagles round his neck. These eagles are also noted by Gabb.[18] 301 [622]

As the Bribri believe that death will overtake the Indian owner who sells one of these gold ornaments, it may be that there are really more of them in existence than the 784 [763]

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Examples of these, in both stone and pottery, were found frequently in the graves at Las Mercedes. The stirring is done with a stick called *molinillo* (pl. XIX, *e*). 415

Meat is eaten fresh, either boiled or roasted, or is dried for future consumption. 251 262

CEREMONIES

Very few ceremonies are now performed by the Bribri, and of those that survive, most are mortuary in their function. None of these ceremonies were witnessed personally, but descriptions were obtained from Ramón, and from several other Indians whose identity was not learned, as these people have a form of the taboo against mentioning their names. A so-called "ceremony," *La Chichara*, which usually precedes an important undertaking, such as house-building, seems to be nothing more than a general chicha-drinking bout. 796 [784] [273]

Death Ceremonies.—When a Bribri is near death, he is removed from his house to a small hut set up at a distance from the camp, because if he should die in his lodge, 763

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it must be burnt to destroy the influence of evil spirits, and the place must be abandoned. After the death, a certain officer called the *oko* is called in, he being the only person who can handle the dead without being defiled. The *oko* wraps the corpse in bark blankets and plantain leaves, and places with it the hammock in which the deceased breathed his last, as well as any other household objects associated with him at death. The *oko* then removes the body to a small platform in the woods, surrounded by a fence built to keep out animals, and roofed with thatch. Some of the natives also declared that this scaffold is densely covered with thorny vines, trained to grow over it. In this temporary tomb the body remains for five years, when it is removed to the communal house of the dead.

Quenching the Fire.—Nine days after the death, a ceremony called *Apagando el fuego*, or "Quenching the Fire," is held, which lasts only one night. The women of the family prepare chicha, cacao, and other materials for a feast, and the *tsúku*,

*539 At night, they were given a large jug for a bed.

One of the prisoners noticed that the head of the house would go out to hunt but as soon as he left, the roar of a jaguar was heard. He spied on the man and discovered that outside of the house he was a jaguar but, by shaking himself, his hide fell off and he became a man who went into the forest.

The watching prisoner crept up to the jaguar skin and carried it off. When the man returned and did not find his jaguar skin, he became furious and began to eat the people.

One old woman, seeing the awful things that were happening, heated an earthen rod and stuck it in the mouth of the man-jaguar while he slept. Then she quickly hid in a little tunnel she had prepared beforehand. This is how the people in Alta Talamanca were rid of such a terrible scourge.

The Medicine Man's Stones

(Cabécar and Bribri)

*539 When *sibu* made the first eight medicine men, he died for four days. Three of these men 756 predicted that he would not stay dead but 778 would go to the sky. One of these was *díkúswa* who was once a water bird and when he said that *sibu* would never die he was made into the most powerful of the *sią́* or medicine man's three principal stones. All medicine men know when they themselves are going to die as ●[763] *díkúswa* disappears or divides himself in half. He is so powerful that only the most powerful doctors dare to use *díkúswa*. The majority rely on *sorkuswa*. All the *sią́*, however, communicate with *sibu* and the medicine men in a [198] "sacred" or private language unknown to the layman.

(15) The Sacred Stones[195]

(Cabécar and Bribri)

There is a spot in Talamanca where there are large boulders. Here live the *sią́*, the medicine men's stones. A new medicine man, if it is possible, goes there and leaves grains of white maize on the rocks at night. The next morning the stones appear.

[195] *See* Linguistic Texts: *sią́*.